

**Department for Workforce Investment
Education Cabinet
Kentucky Office for the Blind
Strategic Plan: 2008-2011**

*Celebrating 30 Years Serving Kentuckians
1977-2007*



Office for the Blind
Strategic Plan: 2008-2011

The Office for the Blind (OFB) is proud to present the Agency's Strategic Plan for 2008 – 2011. This strategic plan provides the framework of the agency's shared vision for the next three years. OFB is committed to providing quality services to the blind and visually impaired citizens of the Commonwealth.

The staff of OFB are committed to providing services to blind and visually impaired individuals that result in increased independence and successful employment outcomes. As an agency we are proud of our history of providing specialized services to blind and visually impaired individuals for over 30 years. However, we recognize that there are challenges facing the agency in an ever changing workforce system. Economic factors, emerging technologies, federal and state systems changes, and emerging service trends for blind and visually impaired individuals were taken into consideration in the development of this plan. This plan is written to respond to the changing needs of the blind and visually impaired individuals we serve, employers and community partners by addressing critical issues facing the agency within the next 3 years.

Needs Analysis: Most Pivotal Ideas to Build the Future of Office for the Blind

The following identified focus areas are the framework areas for the 3-year plan.

Staff Retirement

- Prepare for the 2008 retirement exodus and the depletion of experienced staff and management positions
- To promote and train the next generation of managers for the OFB

Personnel

- Staff recruitment, leadership development, and retention will encompass mentoring and skills building for existing staff- emphasizing management and leadership
- Managers will train new staff and continue to work with their staff to support decision-making.
- Managers in the field will be open-minded to new ideas and encourage creativity within the work environment
- Hire qualified staff, teach them skills to do their job, support as needed.
- Encourage Teamwork
- Focus on upgrading Staff Education, Training, and Qualifications in a standardized manner

Funding

- Budget cuts – so much of our success is based on dollars
- Lack of State Funding and “other funding sources”
- Increase funding sources
- Need to develop plan to maximize value of AT Act program to KY expansion of use of state contracts, grants and state funding opportunities with design that will benefit OFB and its consumers

Communication within the Agency

- Increase communication for building agency-wide cohesion
- Utilization of Central Office staff in working to find solutions-relative answers. Being a small agency we all wear many hats but we must all work together
- Development of a common knowledge across the agency on how funds are being used.

- Increase Communication of Steering Committee-Solve Problems and identify clearly the Role-Function of the group

Growing OFB programs in Alignment with National Trends

- OFB will grow nationally respected programs as the demand for our services grows in accordance to the impending populations trends
- McDowell Land Project

Relationship with Partners

- To increase opportunities for collaboration with other state agencies in programmatic and funding areas
- Good working relationships/partnerships with employers/business
 - To build relationships with employers/businesses for placement, PR, and funding opportunities to always ensure we provide specialized services by maintaining an agency with qualified staff.
- Support of consumer constituent groups statewide
- To better utilize our committees – SRC as problem solving versus reporting

McDowell Center

- The McDowell Center will become a national leader in training facilities, etc.
- Maximize utilization of staff and resources of the McDowell Center
- Revamp the Charles W. McDowell center's curriculum and others programs, such as employment programs.

Our Mission . . .

Our mission is to provide opportunities for employment and independence to individuals with visual disabilities.

Our Values . . .

Consistent with the purpose and principles of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, the Office for the Blind has established the following program principles:

We value our consumers and respect their individual dignity, personal responsibility, self-determination, and right to privacy.

We presume that our consumers, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, are capable of engaging in competitive employment.

We believe that to meet quality employment outcomes, specialized services of the highest quality such as rehabilitation teaching, assistive technology, and orientation and mobility are essential for individuals who are blind.

We believe our consumers must be active participants in their own rehabilitation programs, including making meaningful and informed choices about the selection of their vocational goals, objectives, and services they receive.

We are committed to our responsibility to provide consumers with program information in an accessible format, including Braille, audio recording, and large print.

We value our staff of qualified rehabilitation professionals and believe they can facilitate the accomplishment of consumers' employment goals and objectives.

These principles were developed in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council and Office for the Blind staff with input from consumers and other interested parties.

Focus Area: Retirement

GOAL: Develop a plan for personnel based on an analysis of agency needs, trends, and demographics to retain the knowledge base and leadership required to address the retirement of experienced staff.

Objective A. Employees who anticipate retiring will provide notice and information to permit a smooth transition.

Measure: # of Employees retiring with timely notice and the development of a transition plan.

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Employees are encouraged to provide notice of retirement as early as their decision is made (don't wait for regulatory 2-week notice period) to permit transition planning and request potential overlap hiring	Employee/Manager will communicate position importance to staff and need for adequate transition plan	Results of staff patterns will be reviewed by February 2008 and implementation of communication strategies by March of 2008
b. Provide supervisor with description of practical duties of position; projects working on; committees, councils or boards attended as agency representative	Employee anticipating retirement. Supervisor	7 –10 days from the time notice is given Implementation of the transition plan within two months of notice

Objective B: Development of a Succession Plan

Measure: Completed Succession Plan

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Identify current and future staffing trends by assessing the practical needs of the agency in classifying and filling staff positions	Managers, Director of Consumer Services, Executive Director	Official list Developed by January 2008 Updated Quarterly

b. Redesign positions as vacancies occur to meet evolving service needs of the agency	Supervisor/managers	Review will occur of every vacant position within 2 weeks of the notice of intent to retire
c. To ensure agency ability to continue projects managers will develop a plan to divert projects performed by retiring staff member to other capable staff	Supervisor/manager	Within one month of notice or intent to retire
d. As vacancies occur the agency will attempt to contract with part-time, temporary, or time-limited staff to cover work loads while positions are posted and filled.	Supervisors/managers Executive director	Reviewed within one week of notice of intent to retire

Focus Area: Retirement

Objective D. Development of an Exit Interview Process

Measure: The completion of the form and the # of interviews conducted

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Devise a standardized questionnaire	HRD Coordinator	February 2008
b. Exit interview conducted with every retiree by Central Office agency Human Resources Staff person	HRD Coordinator	Interview will be conducted within the last two weeks of the staffs employment with the agency

c. Information gained through the survey process will be summarized and identified for trends. Identify and review information quarterly.	HRD Coordinator/Steering Committee	Reports distributed and reviewed Quarterly at Steering
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Focus Area: Personnel

Goal 1: OFB will enhance its effort to recruit, hire, train and maintain a highly skilled and diverse workforce.

Objective A. Increase the pool of qualified applicants.

Measure: Develop and implement a recruitment plan

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Identify potential groups and sources for job candidates	HRD Coordinator	September 2008
b. Develop a marketing approach for potential groups and sources of job candidates with an emphasis on enticements	HRD Coordinator	October 2008
c. Develop recruitment strategies for specialized positions (O & M, Deaf-blind, Bioptic Driving,)	HRD Coordinator	December 2008
d. Implement marketing approach	HRD Coordinator	January 2009

Objective B. Retain qualified staff.

Measure: Increase the retention rate of OFB by 25%

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Development of a turnover report	HRD Coordinator and CO Staff	February of 2008
b. Report will be produced quarterly and reviewed for turnover trends	HRD Coordinator and Steering	March of 2008
c. Develop a course of action to address identified trends relating to turnover	HRD Coordinator and Steering	February of 2009
d. Train supervisors on interview skills and techniques and decision making process	Managers/supervisors HRD Coordinator (GSC training)	January of 2009
e. New employees will be assigned a mentor(s) from within the agency for the first six months while learning the job and to be a resource afterward.	Supervisors/manager Mentors	Mentor will be assigned during the first week of employment

Objective C. Provide opportunities for advancement that will foster and retain career employees

Measure: Percentage of staff positions filled by internal advancement

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Create staff career plans.	OFB staff/managers/supervisors	January 2009
b. Review all staff career plans.	OFB Staff/Managers/supervisors	By January 31, 2009
c. Career Development Training	HRD	January 2009

Focus Efficiency Area: Funding

Goal 1: Increase Funding Sources

Objective A. Maximize Value of Assistive Technology Act KY Program for Expansion

Measure: Identification of viable resources

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Identify critical AT functions in other states	KATS, OFB HRD Coordinator	August, 2008
b. Research KY AT program ability to address needs, (ie. reuse)	KATS, OFB HRD Coordinator	November, 2008
c. Identify and gather support (shared resources) to implement new and innovative AT approaches	KATS, OFB Executive Director	June, 2009

Objective B. Research resource opportunities for OFB program needs

Measure: Identification of viable resources

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Meet with OVR leadership, collaborative efforts to assure the sustainability of services	Executive Director	Semi-Annually
b. Identify specific projects not funded in current budget	Steering	Spring 2009
c. Identify programs that OFB can request increased funding	Steering	Fall 2009
d. Research and apply for appropriate grants for identified project areas (b)	Steering, HRD	List of Potential Grant Projects by Fall of 2009 Quarterly Review

e. Identify and develop a list of community partners for collaborative revenue efforts (resource sharing)	Steering	Fall 2009; Review annually
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Efficiency Focus Area: Funding

Goal 2: Maximize Restricted Funds

Objective A. Maximize KBE funding

Measure: # of Contracts Secured

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Rebid Interstate drink and snack contracts	KBE Director and OFB Executive Director and Cabinet Finance Staff	January 2010 and April 2011

Objective B: Maximize the proportion of consumer service dollars recovered from SS Reimbursement

Measure: Achieve 400,000 Annual Return relative to annual SGA

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Increase Counselors awareness of consumers employment activity, wages, and expenses regarding progress toward SGA through training incentives and effective technology communication.	SSA/VR Coordinator and OFB Branch Managers	Internal communication monthly Training held Annually
b. Utilize CMS rewrite to enhance SSA reimbursement tracking process	SSA/VR Coordinator	March 2008

Effectiveness Focus Area: Communication

Goal 1: Improve OFB agency cohesion by sharing more information.

Objective A. Prepare and distribute agency budget reports at steering meetings.

Measure: Distribution of budget at steering

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Develop a suitable fiscal report to show relationships among fiscal divisions and overall agency revenues and expenditures	Budget Person, Executive Director	Quarterly
b. Sharing financial information so that budget detail can be reviewed and modified accordingly.	Managers, Budget Person, Executive Director	January - Annually

Objective B. Have Executive Director prepare a “State of the Agency” communication for distribution to staff only.

Measure: Report developed and sent semi-annually

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Develop appropriate format and list elements to be included	OFB Leadership	January 2008
b. Prepare and distribute electronic document	Executive Director	Semi-Annual

Objective C. Clarify responsibility for sharing of information with all staff.

Measure: Development and Implement effective internal communication processes

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Establish process for sharing relevant information consistently with field staff that is timely, accurate, and understandable.	Steering, subgroup (Derrick, Marcia, Trina, Jerry, Cora)	Develop a process by which communication is shared May 2008

Focus Area: Communication

Goal 2: Improve the supportive relationship between Central Office staff and Field Office staff

Objective A. Increase the interaction between Central Office staff and Field Office staff.

Measure: The # Increased interactions through field office visits and formalized training.

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Capitalize on opportunities for CO and field staff to increase their interactions through trainings and site visits	Central Office Staff	Ongoing as opportunities present themselves (Regional Meetings, KECC, McDowell Week)

Focus Area: Growth

Goal 1: Maximize the growth potential of existing programs

Objective A. Review the services and customer base of See World

Measure: Determine the desired program operation

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Develop a See World Review Committee	See World Coordinator, OFB Steering	May 2008
b. Develop a Business Plan	See World Coordinator/Committee	October 2008
c. Determine the viability of the plan and implement as feasible	See World Coordinator/Committee	July 2009
d. Develop a Marketing Plan	See World Coordinator/Committee	March 2009

Objective B. Utilize the expertise; talents, skills and abilities of OFB related Councils and Committees members.

Measure: Increased input and involvement of members in OFB projects and activities

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Identify individual skill sets of the members to utilize in agency operations and consumer service	Agency Liaison with applicable groups	July 2008
b. Determine applicable areas for increased participation in agency operations and consumer services	Agency Liaison and applicable groups	December 2009

Focus Area: Growth

Goal 2: Identify potential new and innovative methods and programs to meet the needs of consumers who are blind and visually impaired

Objective A. Participate in WIA efforts statewide

Measure: Increase WIA funding for OFB consumers

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. OFB staff involved in membership on local WIBS will meet internally semi-annually to enhance communication regarding WIA	Executive Director and Agency Liaisons	March 2008 August 2008
b. Meet with appropriate OET, KWIB and Cabinet staff to explore/implement WIA opportunities (eg. discretionary funding, etc.)	Executive Director and Fiscal staff	September 2008 (Annually)

Effectiveness Focus Area: McDowell Center

Goal 1: Increase positive service outcomes for Consumers receiving comprehensive services at the McDowell Center

Objective A. Implement and Monitor Core Curriculum Project

Measure: Consumer Satisfaction and decrease in recidivism

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Conduct satisfaction and training follow-up survey	McDowell Center Staff, Consumer Service Staff	Semi-Annually
b. Develop program goals and measures	Outside Consultant, McDowell Center Director, Consumer Service Director	May 2008
c. Implement tracking of goals and measures and summarize results quarterly	McDowell Center Director, Consumer Service Director	September 2008 Quarterly
d. Provide staff training at McDowell Center on how to obtain success for individuals with blindness and how to be competitive for today/future marketplace	External training vendor(s)	Commence by December 2008

Objective B. Review national trends for various instructional methodologies

Measure: # of Site Visits and the identification and listing of national trends

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Site visits at nationally prominent rehabilitation facilities serving individuals with blindness to examine their programs	Consumer Services/McDowell Center management	June 2010
b. Video teleconference and teleconference follow- up meetings with key staff at facilities visited above	Consumer Services/McDowell Center management	December 2010
c. Compile Written summary of site visit results and identified trends	Consumer Services/ McDowell Center management	December 2010
d. Validate or modify programs at the McDowell Center	Consumer Services/McDowell Center Management	December 2010
e. Share information with and seek feedback from staff	Consumer Services/McDowell Center management	June 2011

Focus Area: McDowell Center

Goal 2: Expand training opportunities for consumers in employment programs

Objective A. Emphasize core skills for customer service

Measure: Establish a program to each core customer skills

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Identify and examine best practices in leading programs	Voc Rehab Administrator	May 2008
b. Develop a detailed plan of action	Voc Rehab Administrator	February 2008
c. Present detailed plan of action to Consumer Services/McDowell Center management for approval	Voc Rehab Administrator Director of Consumer Services Branch Manager of McDowell Center	May 2008
d. Design and implement a training program	Director of Consumer Services and Branch manager McDowell Center	October 2008

Objective B. Identify employers to hire consumers who successfully complete training opportunities in the employment programs identified in above strategies

Measure: Establish working employer relationships

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Collaborate with LSHIRM	Voc Rehab Administrators Managers	October 2008

b. Participate in Job Fairs	Voc Rehab Administrators McDowell Center Staff OFB Counselors	May 2009
c. Collaborate with Kentuckiana Works (Louisville-area WIB)	Voc Rehab Administrator	May 2009

Objective C. Market consumers' specific skill(s) attainment to employers

Measure: Successful employment of consumers who complete customer service training

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Develop professional placement relationship with employers identified through Objective B	Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator McDowell Center Staff OFB Counselors	October 2009
b. Leverage existing relationships to seek out/ launch other opportunities with those and other employers	Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator McDowell Center Staff OFB Counselors	October 2009

Objective B. McDowell Land Project

Measure: Project Implementation

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Develop the scope of the land project and receive approval through the proper channels	McDowell Land Project Committee	January 2010
b. Develop a fund raising plan	McDowell Land Project Committee	January 2011
c. Develop Marketing Materials	McDowell Land Project Committee	July 2011
d. Implement the Plan	McDowell Land Project Committee	November 2011

Goal 3: Increase public awareness of OFB services

Objective A. To develop and implement a marketing plan

Measure : Plan development and implementation

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Research the potential and feasibility of obtaining professional assistance in the area of the development of a plan	Marketing Team/Cabinet Communications Office, SRC Public Relations Committee	November of 2008
b. Develop methods for educating and heightening awareness of OFB services	Marketing Team/Cabinet Communications Office, SRC Public Relations Committee	July of 2009
c. Develop a plan and implement marketing activities	Marketing Team/Cabinet Communications Office, SRC Public Relations Committee	September of 2009

Focus Area: Relationships

Goal 1: Identify, increase, and determine value of OFB existing and potential partnerships and collaborations.

Objective A. Increase the number of collaborative partnerships and develop a formalized tracking mechanism

Measure: Formal tracking mechanism developed and the number of collaborative agreements developed

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Establish baseline list of existing collaborations and Identify new potential partnering organizations	Steering members and staff aware of or involved in collaboration activities; list compiled by HRD coordinator	July of 2008
b. Develop Cooperative Agreements with new partners identified by Steering	Steering Members and the HRD Coordinator	July of 2010
c. Identify and report updates of existing and new or planned collaborations at Steering Meetings as a routine agenda item	Steering members and relevant staff involved with particular partnership/collaboration	Quarterly review at Steering Meeting

Focus Area: Relationships

Objective B. To build relationships with employers/businesses increasing the number of employment outcomes

Measure: # of New Employer Relationships

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Maximize Participation in the new National Employment Partnership Project by attending two meetings per year (Jan and Aug)	Executive Director and NEPP Liaison	January and August
b. Provide training to frontline staff to recognize that employers are customers for placements and how to maintain and build business relationships.	HRD Coordinator, Managers/Supervisors	July 2008
c. Develop and establish 15 employer relationships (5 per year)	Assigned field staff, Regional Managers, Voc Rehab Admin	July of 2011

Objective C. Enhance our working relationships with consumer constituent groups

Measure: # of local, state and national activities and events OFB staff attend

Strategy (Action Steps)	Responsible Party	Timeframes for Completion
a. Maximize OFB relationships between staff and blind/visually impaired state consumer groups through increased communication (newsletter, presentations, exhibits, training)	Executive Director, Managers, and staff	Quarterly
b. Increase involvement with cross disability entities and advocacy groups through attendance at interagency meetings and activities.	OFB staff	Quarterly